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Tsk! Writer Outswears Naughty Sex Pistols

By LARRY KELP
Rock and Jazz Editor

Now that the dust has settled around the Sex Pistols' show at Winterland last Saturday, let's look at some aspects that were not covered in Monday's review.

Sociologically the most important part of the show was rock journalist Richard Meltzer's performances before the Avengers' set and again before the Pistols. More than the Pistols or any other occurrence of the evening, Meltzer got the biggest audience reaction with a rapid-fire string of epithets that would have made Lenny Bruce proud.

It was all unannounced, so when Meltzer grabbed a microphone and told the audience to perform unnatural acts upon itself, that its mothers did even worse things, you could feel the immediate tension spread like a wave through the hall. Within seconds hundreds were shouting curses at Meltzer.

But even the most creative of beings can go to far, and when Meltzer broadened his line of attack to include the city of San Francisco, even concert promoter Bill Graham reacted, and had him removed from the stage and from Winterland.

This was the first victory for the Sex Pistols since they were denied visas a few weeks back.

But the problem for the band is simply that it has been overexposed by the media. Fans come knowing what to expect, and how they are supposed to react. The Pistols and their manager Malcolm McLaren agreed, "He was the only anarchy and chaos of the show," free-lance writer Howard Klein of San Francisco explained. "The band has offered to fly Meltzer to any of their shows he wants to attend."

It should be mentioned that Meltzer, author of "The Aesthetics of Rock," was one of the first rock journalists, writing for Rolling Stone and Crawdaddy during their infancies, and now in the Village Voice. Meltzer also has his own punk rock band with other writers, called Ven (short for vomit). None of the members knows how to play an instrument.

Other serious endeavors by Meltzer include writing lyrics for the New York heavy metal band Blue Oyster Cult (from the early "She's As Beautiful As a Foot" to "Death Valley Nights" on BOC's new "Spectres" album).

Meanwhile Klein, a keen observer of the new wave scene locally, will fly to England next week to interview the Pistols for Creem magazine. He has already interviewed two members of the band on his late night radio shows on KSAN and KSJO, and was an inside observer of the quartet's San Francisco stay.

"To get kids involved, you have to get them to respond, not just

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David Bransten (standing) is teased by Joshua W. Pollack, Estanislau G.B. Bautista II and Vincent Rubino

Geary Performance

ACT Polishes Lackluster Work

By ROBERT TAYLOR
Tribune Drama Critic

Director Edward Hastings and a superlative cast have distilled the essence of James Agee's "A Death in the Family" into the American Conservatory Theater's spare staging and human dimensions of "All the Way Home."

The 1960 play by Tad Mosel is sometimes a very ordinary adaptation of an extraordinary story, but its scenes of family drama can be enormously affecting. ACT's production, which opened Tuesday at the Geary Theater, makes the most of them without cloying sentiment or looming melodrama.

Designer Ralph Funicello has stripped away the setting, while Hastings and his actors have returned to the original novel to illuminate the Tennessee family struck by tragedy.

The play is an outline of Agee's Proustian remembrance of Knoxville in the spring of 1915, when he was "successfully disguised to myself as a child." Mosel's staging demands minimized the child's part in the story, sent his father offstage at the end of the first act and expanded his mother's role to the central character.

Time is compressed to three days and family conflicts are heightened, but despite Mosel's theatricality the play becomes tiresome as the catharsis of the third act becomes an overextended epilogue. It is a long way home.

ACT's ensemble performers, however, bring perfect ensemble feeling to generation after generation of the story's Lynch and Follet families. David Bransten, a 10-year-old actor from the Young Conservatory training program, is fresh and naive as Rufus without the coyness that often curdles children's performances. Hastings' production opens with a brilliant tableau as Rufus appears alone onstage and then seems to re-create the other characters from memory.

Jay O. Saunders blends an imposing physical presence with an unusually warm parental sensitivity as Rufus' father Jay. Barbara Dirickson, in her first major mature role as Jay's wife Mary, is enormously sympathetic even in her pinched piety.

Every performance is on a high level. Joy Carlin is Rufus' favorite aunt, and J. Steven White his boorish Uncle Ralph (who takes on more responsibility as an antagonist, since God can't be blamed for everything). William Paterson, Anne Lawder and Daniel Kern are Mary's father, mother and brother; Joseph Bird and Marrian Walters are Jay's surviving parents, and 24-year-old Libby Boone portrays the 103-year-old matriarch of the Follet family, wearing make-up designed by Rick Echols.

Mosel's play will never be as great a work as the original novel, but ACT's production evokes Agee's story as well as the Americana of Thornton Wilder's "Our Town" and Eugene O'Neill's "Ah, Wilderness!" Hastings has discovered the emotional heart of the play and made it tick.

N.Y. Cellist to Give Bay Area Recital

New York cellist Fortunato Arico, a regular with the N.Y. Chamber Soloists and Music from Marlboro, will give his first Bay Area recital in an all-Bach program shared by organist Edwin Flath on Sunday at 3 p.m. in St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Berkeley.

His concert is part of a week-long Midwinter Bach Festival of the California Bach Society spanning three cities.

The focal event will be a concert of Bach's Cantatas Nos. 2 and 146, and the Brandenburg Concerto No. 5, all under Flath's baton, to be given Sunday at 8 in Trinity United Methodist Church in Berkeley.

Horowitz S.F. Recital On Feb. 12

Pianist Vladimir Horowitz has scheduled a recital at the Opera House in San Francisco for Sunday, Feb. 12 at 4 p.m., with mail orders only to be accepted by the San Francisco Symphony box office until Jan. 30.

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